

More than 1,400 degrees awarded to UMassD Class of 2019 undergraduates

UMass Dartmouth held two Undergraduate Commencement ceremonies today, awarding approximately 1,450 undergraduate degrees to the Class of 2019 at Cressy Field on the university's 710-acre main campus.

"This is your time to seek out and build a better world that is grounded in civil discourse, civility, mutual respect, and a strong sense of humanity," Chancellor Robert E. Johnson said. "I now charge you, the Class of 2019, to take your collective genius and go forth with a strong sense of humanity and an unyielding faith to transform the world as a global citizen."

"I am the first president to graduate from UMass and I know what a UMass education means firsthand. I also know what a UMass Dartmouth education does and the impact it will have on your life. You have the tools, you got the education, now you can set out and accomplish anything in your careers." said UMass President Marty Meehan.

The afternoon undergraduate ceremony for the College of Engineering and the College of Arts & Sciences featured Congressman William R. Keating, who received the Chancellor's Medal and delivered the commencement address. Congressman Keating told students "the first thing to remember in this changing world when people say to you that you're too young for a certain job or to follow a certain path – don't concede that, don't be swayed by that. There's no time for that."

At the morning undergraduate ceremony for the College of Nursing, Charlton College of Business, and the College of Visual & Performing Arts, commencement speaker Ellen M. Zane,

Chief Executive Officer & President Emeritus of Tufts Medical Center, received an honorary doctorate degree and addressed students. Speaking on her groundbreaking career, Zane told graduates “risk is good. If it were easy, anybody can do it. Taking jobs that are hard, harder than other people will want, will differentiate you and will give you opportunities others won’t have...But be cautious, though not cowardly. Be courageous, because courage is contagious.”

The morning student speaker was Silavong Phimmasone (Management Leadership) of Springfield, MA. A student member of the UMass Board of Trustees, Phimmasone told his fellow graduates, “It is a time to embrace the idea that every experience will make us stronger and prepare us to achieve our dreams. And remember, even when life is hard and it rains on us, we will continue to grow from it and the sun will shine again.”

The afternoon student speaker was Nneoma Ugwu (Civil Engineering) who came to UMass Dartmouth from Nigeria. Ugwu spoke of overcoming societal hurdles to becoming a black female engineer. “In Igbo, my mother tongue, there is a saying which is ‘*Nwa Agu anaghi ata ahihia*’ – meaning a lion’s child does not eat grass,” she said. “You see, a lion always knows they are a lion, even as a child. The lion in me is an engineer. Looking at all of us graduating today, I see a pride of lions.”

The university expects to confer nearly 2,000 undergraduate, graduate degree, and law degrees to the Class of 2019. The graduate and law ceremonies will take place on Monday, May 13 at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. respectively.

More about the UMass Dartmouth Class of 2019:

- Graduates come from more than 33 countries, 34 states, and 257 Massachusetts communities.
- The average age of graduating undergraduate students is 24.5

and graduate and law students 30.3.

- Male graduates made up 48.2% of the class of 2019, while 51.8% of the class is females.
- Students of color made up 31% of the Class of 2019.
- For undergraduates, the most degrees were conferred in Psychology, Marketing, Nursing, Accounting, and Crime & Justice Studies.
- The most graduate degrees were conferred in Computer Science, Business Administration, Accounting, Teaching, and Mechanical Engineering.
- The university awarded 32 Ph.D.'s and 48 Law degrees.